



# TOWN OF KITTERY

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Nancy Colbert Puff  
Town Manager

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## Library Committee Minutes – August 19, 2015

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Present: George Dow, Tom Emerson, Steve Workman, Tom Newbold, Kristina DeMarco  
Debra Kam

Staff: Nancy Colbert Puff

Absent: Lee Perkins

The meeting convened at 9:00 am.

The Committee welcomed Debra Kam who was unable to attend the inaugural meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup>. She introduced herself as someone with an architecture/design and print publishing background. She is a devoted member/user of the Library.

### 1. Approval of the Minutes of 7/30/15.

Debra corrected the draft minutes to indicate her background was in both architecture/design and print publishing. With correction, Tom N. moved to approve the minutes, and Steve seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

### 2. Meeting Schedule

Due to a conflict, Nancy requested moving the August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting to a noon start time. All approved.

### 3. Discussion re: Presentation by Lee Perkins on Library Planning to Date – continued from July 30<sup>th</sup> agenda

Lee was not present at the meeting, so this agenda item was not addressed. Nevertheless, the Committee did discuss the importance of becoming familiar with the site plan and planning to date. George expressed concern about the neighborhoods reaction, and through that the average resident had no idea of what the project entails. He suggested that the lack of knowledge may lead to negative opinions. He said the Committee needs to ask questions to be in a good position to provide answers to the community. He's heard suggestions of planning for the KCC campus, and that maybe the Library could be located somewhere else on the site, and that these are questions the community will have as well.

Tom N. emphasized that the proposal is mostly unknown to the community, and that the Committee should remain open to exploring all aspects of the project and be in a position to facilitate agreement. The vision should be apparent, and support an upgraded asset and an integrated site.

Kristina expressed appreciation for all the work the Library has done to date, but even though they may think they are near the end of the process, the community and the Committee are new to it.

Debra stated that the Committee has been given a “to do,” list, but she agreed with Tom N. in that building consensus is a key element of the Committee’s work. The community needs to buy in to the proposal. A new library will become a much bigger part of the community. Tom E. commented that he believed the average resident has no idea of what is going on.

Kristina mentioned that she has been speaking with people, and has found that many are attached to the Rice building, and its downtown location. She acknowledged that the KCC is also “center” of the community. She emphasized that this is the community’s library, and the community should be behind whatever the ultimate plan is.

Tom N. wondered if the Committee shouldn’t explore a broader context than the assigned questions. Tom E. quickly responded that the questions are a given, but we can determine whether other items come up as we address these. He noted that while the library would clearly benefit by being under one roof, that there may be a loss of authenticity by moving to the new site. That said, his planning instinct leans towards the KCC as a good site, as its daytime use is occupied by the young and older populations, which is similar to the Library’s usage. He liked to notion of building a “campus.”

Steve and Debra both thought there was clear synergy and opportunity, and that a campus approach was appropriate.

George expressed concern of potential failure for the RPL, despite the clear need for an update. He thought there was frustration at the process to date, as the RPL determined their requirements to implement the Library they envision (as the Library experts), but the Town Council must consider public opinion in their deliberations, and that it seems like “sides” have been staked out. He understands there may be zoning issues, etc. that need broader discussion. Tom N. agreed that a change is needed.

Nancy brought up the idea of posting various materials to the web site, and asked for the Committee’s thoughts on what might be helpful. She appointed out that while all documents presented at a meeting are public, that posting the materials on the web is another decision that requires consideration. Tom N. offered that the Committee is in a position to manage communication, and Debra liked the idea of posting prior studies, notes from past public meetings (RPL and KCC), etc. Tom E. noted that site plans are generally not able to be interpreted by general public, but that he thought it would be helpful to have them posted (Debra noted the plan still requires editing to remove lines that appear to indicate access from Shapleigh Road, but once corrected, could be posted).

Kristina stated that all members of the Committee are serving because they are supportive of the Library. She noted, however, that when questions have been raised, it can feel like the opposite – that the Library may perceive questions as “against” them, and as undermining. As a result, there can be hesitation about raising issues, and she wanted to confirm that it is the Committee’s role to both ask questions and she felt strongly that this did not translate into lack of support. Tom E. echoed her concern, and that there is a risk of the proposal being considered a “fait accompli.” Steve warned that this “with us or against us” approach is set up for failure. He commented that the KCC board has felt that raising a question is linked to disagreement, as a result, conversations can be quite

limited, and that the “silence has been deafening.” As a facilitator, he cautioned against “group think,” whereby groups can become so like-minded as to lose sight of outside perspective.

Kristina asked if we are to answer the questions regardless of whether we had an opinion on the proposed move in general – the consensus was “yes.”

Debra stated that there appear to be questions for the Committee, and questions for the RPL. Nancy reminded the Committee that the Council has listened to the RPL’s proposal, and insofar as it had remaining concerns, asked the Committee be established to assist it in advancing its understanding.

The meeting adjourned at 10 am.